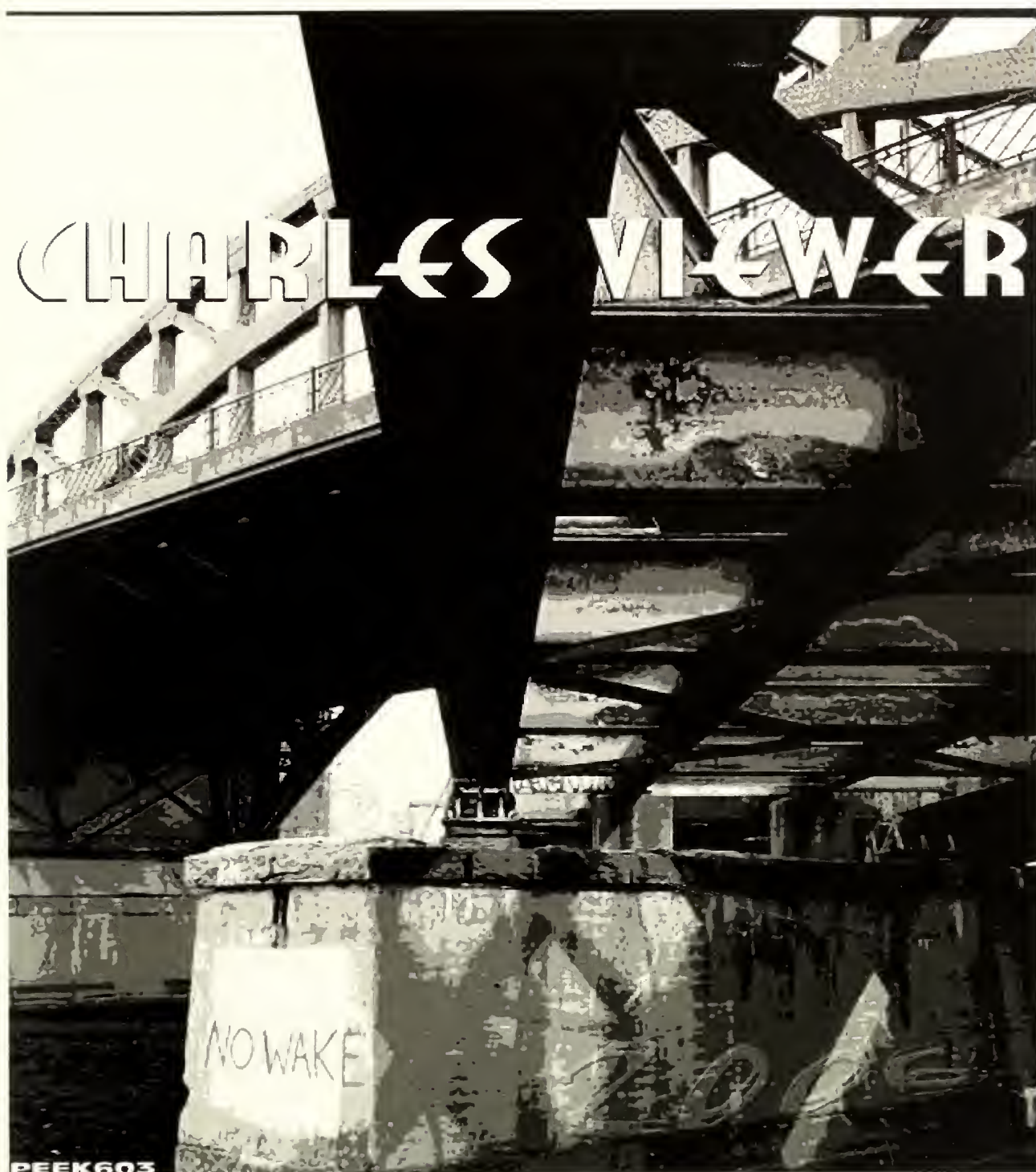




FISHER COLLEGE

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The Charles Viewer

Poetry, Prose and Art
from the students of Fisher College, 2006

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The Charles Viewer is a student literary magazine designed to encourage interest in writing, art and photography by publishing the original works of Fisher College students.

We appreciate all work that has been turned in by the students in order to keep *The Charles Viewer* alive. We, the staff, hope this issue inspires you to become a better writer, artist and photographer. So sit back and enjoy the work of fellow Fisher students, and we hope you like the magazine.

For their combined efforts in bringing this publication to life, we thank the following: Dr. Charles Perkins, President; Dr. Theresa Madonna, Vice President for Academic Affairs; Susan Jordan, Chair, Division of Liberal Arts & Sciences; Travis Anderson, Director of Co-Curricular Programming; Larry Lopez, Assistant Director of Co-Curricular Programming; Adrian Bathurst at Information Services; and to all faculty (especially Dr. Dean Walton and Malinda Polk, longtime supporters of the *Viewer*) who encouraged students to submit their writing and art to the magazine.

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The Wrong Place

One, Two, Three, Four
I heard God Knocking at my door.
I wondered why he came so early.
I didn't know why
There was Blood on my hands,
Blood on my shirt,
Blood on my face.
A smoking hole in my chest
Looking like Mount Saint Helen blew,
I didn't know what to do!
Moving my head around like Ray Charles
Use to do.
DAMN!
One word and all of this came true.
I knew I should have never looked at her,
Felt her, or even came close to her,
But I couldn't resist.
A shaped heart
Cleared the cloud of cancer in the air
As I got closer.
Finally my heart stopped,
Eyes glassy gray,
My head on the floor,
My last breath deflated like a hole in a balloon.

A Quest Forever Caught in Rain

A cold embrace of nothingness
Is something far from righteousness?
Questions aroused from lasting pain
Quest forever caught in rain.

An empty field's lonely expanse
Holds an unemployed death's lance
I am the king without domain
Quest forever caught in rain.

Something from nothing cannot be
But nothing is something I see
It surrounds over all I reign
Quest forever caught in rain.

My nomadic territory
Immortal and transitory
Nothing keeps me from being sane
Quest forever caught in rain.

No one to judge or to ponder
Subject-less kingdom to flounder
A choice made in selfish disdain
Quest forever caught in rain.

Oh how I do hate the living
All their frolicking and signing
Emotion siphoned from my vain
Quest forever caught in rain.

In a bed of flowers I'm lain
In sorrow I am to be slain
No true power can I obtain
Quest forever caught in rain.

One Night Stand

I hate you for getting inside
Me the way you did.
For making me feel so electric
With one simple stroke.

I hate you for wanting me the way you did.
For breaking down
My carefully constructed exterior
To get closer to my interior.

I hate you for making my never
Turn into a maybe,
Into a never say never.

I hate you everyday since that night
For making me think this long
About this,
About you.

Blues for Zigi

I left for New York City
With the essentials,
ten bucks,
and Zigi in bed sound asleep
I planted a kiss on his moist forehead
And wrote a goodbye letter
resting it on my vacant pillow
By his side
I will miss his irises
The color of fall chestnuts
How I loved him,
When he wakes he will reach for me
Call out my name
And after some silent moments, realize
I'm not there
He will miss and maybe cry for me
I will cry for him when my life has settled away
During the wee hours of morning
In another man's bed
I will feel sadness and deep melancholy blues
For Zigi

Rosaries Are All the Rage In Europe

The piercing ring on our phone woke me up. I rubbed my eyes groggily and overheard two bits of conversation: he had died and the casket would be decorated with a crucifix. My parents were speaking in muffled voices downstairs. I kept repeating "I do not care at all," as I descended the staircase in my outgrown pajamas. Putting on my best face, I strode into the kitchen. The sticky summer air was leaking through the open windows and I wanted to be outside playing barefoot in the green grass.

Instead I was here, watching my father cry for the first and only time in my life. Broad shouldered and standing at 6'3", my father's figure, which was usually an imperious one that loomed over me, was different today. Today he looked broken and weak. The only thing that seemed to keep him from falling onto the tile floor were my small mother's arms. My parents rarely exchanged hugs.

At six years old, I did not understand enough about life to even begin comprehending death. When my grandfather was admitted to the hospital, my mother bought me a book. A poorly drawn koala bear in hideous clothing invaded the front cover. Inside was a pathetically compiled story complete with illustrations of the koala crying when its grandmother died. Other pages showed the stupid animal bringing flowers to a gravestone and another page showed it riding a skateboard with a helmet and safety equipment. I was a smart kid for my age. Koalas did not ride skateboards; they ate eucalyptus leaves. Proper death etiquette was not covered in the story. It must come naturally. But things did not come naturally for me; I would have still been shitting my pants if toilet training was not a nursery school prerequisite.

My little sister staggered into the room. I was saved. Her pale face was moist with tears which improved her already rosy cheeks. She stopped in the middle of the room and stared down at the tile floor, her long blonde hair falling in her face. I ignored my weeping parents and looked over to her. "Did you get a prize in the Apple Jacks this morning, Bridget?" I asked, smiling. She did not respond. "It's a flip-book, isn't it? Let me see," I continued in a bright voice. My mother shot a murderous glance at me through her puffy eyes. I ignored her. I did not care. He was old and ugly with rotten yellow teeth that were particularly sallow where he used to smoke a pipe. He had a thick, raspy voice that gave me nightmares.

My mother cornered me later that day. "You don't need to ask your sister where her flipbook is while you strut around looking happy as can be. For Christ's sake, Brenden, you can at least try to look upset." The tears evaporated and she looked livid. I glanced up at her in my 'too small' pajamas. "Well, Aunt Bet, Uncle John, Haley and Alex are flying in from Denmark. Maybe you should think about what they are going through." My mother turned on her heel and I watched her disappear down the spiral staircase. I knew what this meant. It meant church. I hated church.

I did not go to the wake. Mom said I was too young. I did not go to the funeral. I said it was too rainy. The reception afterwards was unavoidable, though. It was being held in my house. That morning, my mother stuffed me into a restricting black suit. Downstairs was a congregation of old people clad in black and smelling strongly of mothballs and cats. The guests held tall, skinny martini glasses. Smoke from their cigarettes billowed out of our ornate dining room. Their outfits looked out of place, like photographs from my history book: "Chapter Four: The Roaring Twenties." The guests introduced themselves or told me that this must be hard to deal with. I avoided the lot of them by hiding behind my mother's legs. Dr. Seymour and his plump wife, Eleanor, gave me money. This was the first time I had met them and they were both in tears. In just thirteen years, I would be driving them home from the Troy Country Club. Eleanor would look like the emaciated walking dead and hobble around on an archaic cane because she had a broken hip. Dr. Seymour would have Alzheimer's disease. Everyone at my house looked so miserable. How could one person bring all this dreariness? He was probably responsible for this rain, too.

My grandfather would be a topic in casual conversation for the rest of my life. "He was such a generous man." "I could tell you were a McCarthy as soon as I saw you; your grandfather and I were good friends." "James and I would always golf on the weekends." People knew my name just because of my grandfather, and for the first time, I became interested in his life.

One day, while visiting my grandmother, I spotted a rosary. It was my grandfather's and I eyed it greedily. It was Italian and carved from crimson colored oriental wood. It smelt Heavenly. Each piece of the rosary was artistically constructed right down to the silver crucifix. "Take it, just don't get rope burn from it." I wouldn't. I had no intention of using it for prayer. Instead, it would be a necklace, like the models in "Vogue" wore. It was sacrilege, but I did not care.

I never enjoyed religion. Faggots and interpretations of the English Bible do not mix. This gave me an excuse to always skip church. Although, one Sunday I went. It was winter and I found myself inside Saint Paul's. The church interior was white, and the limitless ceiling was splashed with lavender and salmon. It looked like an Easter egg. I wanted to flip the building upside-down so that I could stomp on the painted ceiling with my slushy boots, and slide down its architectural curves. The giant statues had plaques under them with my grandfather's name. So did the stained glass windows and the silver Stations of the Cross. People must be terrified of death to donate so many things. For a greedy moment, I wished everything in the church would vanish and all the money invested into this building would sink into my pockets. My eyes stumbled onto a wizened woman in the corner murmuring while clutching her rosary. My expensive leather boots were covered in snow and salt stains, and were dirtying the sacred floor. I never went back to church, but I stopped laughing at people who believe in God.

The next few years of my life became a project. I clipped newspaper articles and laminated obituaries that mentioned my grandfather's name. They were impersonal, littered with words like "friend to all" and "economic giant." Worthwhile information came from people who knew my grandfather. "Sixty-two years old – he just did not live long enough. He was funny, but never spoke ill of people, not like your grandmother."

On a dark and stormy day, years later, I drove to the cemetery where he was buried. The hollow ground made thumping noises beneath my feet and there were worms. I thought back to a song the children used to sing in kindergarten. "The worms crawl in, the worms crawl out. Did you ever see a hearse go by and think that someday you'll probably die? They put you in a little box and cover you up with dirt and rocks." The tune kept looping through my head as I trudged onward through the thick mud, intentionally crushing worms in my wake. I stood at my grandfather's stone for what seemed like hours, bewitched by the cross that hovered over his name. The rain was eerily beating against my Burberry umbrella.

At home, I took his rosary off of my neck and opened its leather case to place it where it belonged. I noticed small black writing scrawled inside the pouch. I squinted to make out the tiny letters which had been written by a fountain pen. It read "Epiphany."

The Barn Doors Open

Years of work had loosened her bolts
Tires creaked, muffler spat
The old truck's mahogany bed bore bent nails and dents
He loved her cracked leather seats
Smell of hay and horses

All winter she slept in the barn
She was too old for another winter
The plow too heavy for her engine
The roads too salty for her rust
But winter had finally failed
The last flake of snow had fallen

The barn doors open and light up the dust in the air
The animals watch as the wrinkly farmer enters
He's wearing the old tool belt
She was to be fixed
Bolt by bolt he tightens

Betsy the farm truck runs again



If I Could Come Back to You

I would be satisfied
If I could have a bowl of steaming rice
Or a cup of freshly drawn green tea
My mother makes

I would be so relaxed
If I could take a hot bath
The refreshing smell of *yuzu**
Floating on the bathwater
Prevails in the tiled bathroom
I rise from the bath
Right before I feel dizzy
From staying in there too long
I drink a glass of *umeshu***

Oh Japan
I took your daily life for granted

Modotte koraretara

Ippaino hokahokano gohanwo
Taberaretara okasano
Iretateno ochaga nometara
Manzoku dekiru

Atsui yuni tukareba
Yuttari dekiru
Yubuneni ukanda
Sapparitosita yazuno kaoriga
Tairuno ofuroni hirogaru
Tukarisugide
Noboseru chottomaeni
Watashiha ofurokara agaru
Soshite umeshuwo nomu

Aa nihon
Kono nitizyowo atarimaeni
Omotte itayo

*A sour citrus fruit, used for its zest

**A liqueur made from Japanese plums

My Statue

Struggling with no motivation,
no feelings and no inspiration.
The dust accumulates on my statue's pen and hand
while its brains scream for no demands.

Like a statue stuck in the woods
vines restrain my motions that could.
The dirt builds up at my ankles and feet
while the roots consume my old defeats.

Eyes crusted up by overgrown weeds,
teeth stained by Nature's cancer indeed.
Skin has turned to cracked stone,
no more existence of blood and bone.

The sky has turned grey and cold,
the trail to my statue has turned too old.
These seasons still have come and gone
while the leaves build up what's right and wrong.

Age and experience the statue does control,
but its motivation is gone as a whole.
Trees lay to block his way,
and the rain falls to increase his decay.

He's been in the woods now for years
but has never been acknowledged because of his fears—
fear of life and motivations,
fear of feelings and inspirations.

One day my statue will awake,
motivation ruining his break.
Vines rip and stones fall,
no more fear, no more worry. . .at all.

Tight Rope Walker

Pushing life to the edge—
Aware of the shadow stories below,
His life calculated on an unlinked face,
Pushing hard from the ticking hand of authority
Below, eyes focused at dawn, climbing to the top
In bitter tastes from a licensed dealer

Mumbling feet across a line
Frayed and worn
Adrenaline high
Slipping metal held in reckless fingers
He is cracking on weightless glass
Freely moving down a thread
There he lies
Falling whispers and fantasy

Nude Descending a Staircase

Without a minute to spare
Rushing her steps
Forgetting anything to wear.

Her thoughts are a constant blur
And we cannot see any of her.

But when we catch a glimpse
Her face is at peace
Thinking of her next task.

Since You've Been Away

Since you've been away
I've cooked catfish and white rice for my brothers
I didn't clean out your bedroom the way dad wanted me too
So he sleeps in the den
When he's not at the bar
Since you've been away, I've fornicated 16 times
Do I still get to join you in heaven?
It was only with Jimmy though, from down the street
He says he misses your brownies at our Christmas parties
He also waits to see me cry and says sorry a lot about you being gone
I go to rosary sometimes with grandma because you would have liked me to
She smells the same, like fried chicken and drug store perfume
But she doesn't ask me how I'm doing like everybody else
I like her for that
I set my hair in pink rollers the way you did
But by morning they all fall out
Since you've been away,
I stopped wrestling with my brothers
Instead I watch them from a distance, or read with Fat Cat on the porch
Speaking of Fat Cat, she doesn't scratch me anymore
Maybe because she knows if I don't take care of her, nobody will
Your flowers died, I'm sorry
You didn't show me how to care for them
And the boys play football on them since you're not here to tell them otherwise
But I suppose I should have taught myself the way you did
Since you've been away,
I went back to piano because you loved it
The way you played "Willow Weep For Me" and "Sunday Kind of Love"
From memory
And taught me how on Saturdays
I found your passport and driver's license in the glove compartment of the Chevy,
The grilled cheese sandwich you were eating the last time I looked into your face
I wear your ids in my back pocket
As for the sandwich, it rotted away
Since you've been away, away, away you've been
With sincerity, I miss you today





Rock

Fervor

Cyrus sat in the comfort of his arm chair replaying in his head the events of the previous evening. Upon his arrival he called for his beloved Tanzania repeatedly, producing no answer. She had been his companion for the last eight years; he cared for her beyond question, and would stop at nothing to get her back. He knocked hard on the neighbor's door, cocaine dealing low life gangster at the bottom of the food chain. As the only white person in the entire Detroit area he occupied Cyrus was consequentially often the last shown respect by the general population.

"Where is she?" he asked.

"Who?" the thug said, smirking and scratching his nose sniffing.

"I am not going to ask again," Cyrus stated.

"Piss off cracker," the thug answered attempting to shut the door.

A skilled boxer and martial artist, Cyrus right hooked the thug through the open crack of the door in the side of the jaw knocking him off his feet into a shelf. He stepped to examine his surroundings. The place was a mess, trash everywhere, food wrappers littered the floor. Powered mirrors lay in stacks on the coffee tables. He slapped the thug to his senses.

"Where did they take her?" he asked.

"You already know, down the street, to the boss's," the petrified thug stammered. The gang was a combination of "bloods" and "crips" collaborating in a major crime syndicate even the police would not approach. Cyrus took several pistols and a pump action shotgun left the spot and returned home.

The rest of the night consisted of oiling, and loading each round separately, counting the ammunition and preparing his armor. At approximately six in the morning, a knock sounded at the front door. Wearing his bullet proof vest he crept slowly towards the door, turning out all house lights on the way. He camouflaged bandana and cargo pants decreased his body's visibility in the dark. Peeking through the window, he could see six shapes standing at the front door. Obviously the thug next door notified the boss of his rescue rampage. Slowly turning the door knob, and kicking the steel door open catching the knocker in the face sending him over the porch railing. In two bullets he caught the next two one round to the head each. Releasing a few more shots off he hit two more pummeling them down the stairs. Turning, and sprinting low for the backdoor he grabbed the shotgun on the way out.

Leaping over the chain linked fence, and crawling on his stomach around the corner of the building through the bushes he briefly hid. Eyeing the remaining two kneeling at the bottom of the stairs, diving sideways from the bushes he burned the closest with a spray to the chest. With brute strength, and accurate speed, he blasted the next before the first shell hit the ground. Slinging the shotgun over his shoulder, he began the two block journey to enemy headquarters.

The sound of sirens pierced the air from far behind his path of destruction. Creeping through the shadows, he edged back against the brick wall of the alleyway. Only the shiny metal glint of weapons reflected the moonlight, and streetlights on the dark gunman. Pistols jam packed the front and back of his waist, with a cobalt blue steel shotgun resting on his back. Approaching the two guards, at the front door, he smiled, and shot the one on the right in the upper chest the impact pushing him back on the stairs. Pulling an additional pistol from his waist, he hit the one of the left three times, and placed a single bullet in the forehead of the body on the stairs. Sliding the pistol back into his waist, he breached the door with the shotgun, and kicked it open. A figure in the hallway turned around to face him, to receive a blast splintering the walls. A gang member drove out from the door on the left with a desert eagle firing badly aimed shots. He pumped the kid in the shoulder sliding him across the floor. Drawing two Berettas, he strafed through the kitchen on the right firing rounds at the remaining security on his way through. Three more bodies, dropped to the floor lifeless. He kicked open the door of the master bedroom exposing a man on a bed with two women.

"You know the boss?" asked Cyrus.

"Yes, you know I am, take whatever you want don't hurt me," he whimpered.

He shot the man between the eyes, and told the women to shut up; he heard a loud, screeching, repetitive bark from the back room. He shot the door knob off, and pushed the door open with his right pistol. He looked down at the dog in the homemade cardboard kennel.

"Tanza," he said, as he reached down, placing the miniature German Schnauzer under his arm as he walked out.



El Congo

Lunchtime. After school.
Season, hour, weather – all perfect for hunting mangos in El Salvador.
Eighteen and twenty six, we
walked through greenery. I admired her physical features,
small bones, creamy pale skin,
strawberry hair braided into pigtails under a thatched hat.

Losing ourselves
with a lust for fruit,
Sara pointed at the plumpest mango.
It swayed in the sensuous air.
Disoriented from marijuana plants
burnt to clear *calles* in the village,
we staggered to the extra lush tree.

Lace from her panties, her sunburn line revealed-
as my temptress crouched down by the trunk.
While thinking of applying aloe, the young man in my head scolded me.

I wrapped my legs around the dry trunk and scuffed up the tall tree.
Branches tore my white linen tank top from my body.
Feet below, the feeling of Sara caressing my exposed abdomen with her eyes.
Throwing the machete forward,
I thrust into the white fiber and penetrated the ripe fruit.
The mango fell to the moist ground—
we mutually decided to lunch outside of El Congo.

A quiet walk back to the village, feelings vanished but the rain started.
Sara was once again my English teacher, Ms. Beck.
I was student tutor and assistant librarian.
Divided the fruit in half, we could not have the whole thing, even if we wanted to.



Sincerely, Jonathan Paul Labrecque

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

I

think that it is time,

time for

us all to

forget

our daily problems,

think about the tragedy

that surrounds

victims

of Hurricane Katrina.

So make your move to help,

as we all make a stronger force than one

alone.

This is not a flattery poem

but

this

is

a message

that a

lazy,

sheltered boy,

isolated from the reality of

life

and

tragedy

wrote.

So now he is moved to

help

and

S P R E A D

the WORD.

Now that I have sent this out to you

STOP

THINK

HELP.

Please after you read this,

donate a little bit of your
time,
money,
to help the victims of this
tragedy.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Paul Labrecque

P.S. I hope that this poem helps to motivate you to help our brothers and sisters who desperately need our help.

Rx

I've always reflected on another's word
To dictate my every motion
And I've tried to reproduce it
With a cautiously phrased potion

But on the unusual circumstance
When language leaves its vial
I'll turn to a more concrete medicine
For a more productive trial

(Untitled)

The feeling of emptiness
echoes through my entire body.

Sharp pains digging away
at my flesh
As it slows my body, ambition, and goals,
but most importantly desire.
I try and try to relight that fire
to reach for it all.
It is in stride and right in
front of my face;
but it's these sharp pains
digging and digging away at me,
the only thing left behind is my
heart.
But that too has now shed
some tears and blood
which eventually will be covered
by scars,
but the question remains: in
how long.

Mourning Picture

She's got a little book.
She thinks it tells the truth
easy answers so simple she can't refuse.
She's disingenuous,
just like the smile on her face,
somewhere there her mind has been misplaced.
Taking the easy way,
always gets you through the day.

Losing yourself in the path that
you've taken.
You are nothing,
if not vacant.
Build yourself up
just to end up more hollow.
Fall to your knees,
for the false that you follow.

Despairing once again, and more anon

Despairing once again, and more anon
As the whole world falls all around you see
A dissimulation of all can be
A vile wicked verse to ponder upon
When the sky no longer gleams light at dawn
And the forest's decay, plain without tree
The lakes dry up, a dark languishing sea
Cities now empty of their servile pawns
Few still remain in unbroken spirit
For hope's sad curse shall forever remain
The human plague's pain shall thus now sustain
I don't know whether or not, I admit
Has there been anything else among us
Has destruction been something pious?



Ice Racing

A summer's hot sun
Falls on a winter's cold sleep
Melting and icy grave.



Love of the Game

Our father, which art on the court
Basketball be thy name.
Above the rim be thy game.
Damage will be done.
Championships will be won.
In the league and on the street
NBA or the playground
We must always play with heart.
Give us our daily workout.
Forgive us for lazy defense,
as we feel sorry for them who slack against us.
And lead us not into the streetlife,
but away from the stress of the world off the court
and to the freedom of the game.
From left to right, my cross over is like poetry.
Coming down my jump shot is like rain.
Teach a young one how to handle the rock, with respect
and know that glory comes after the pain.

For B-ball is the kingdom,
The passion to play and will win
As a player and coach
Respect for the game
For ever and ever
Ball above all.

Dead Dreams Don't Drown

A far corner of the ocean had been disturbed for some years. Over the waters ruthless bands of pirates massacred and looted every passing vessel. Storms equipped with giant waves, war ships and angry demons had worked tirelessly to drown the legendary *Victoria*. She sailed in all her glory on this day, her giant lily-white sails fully stretched, arms open to all those who called for a bloody challenge. She appeared a valiant wreck with many scars, but being the queen of Captain Jim James' fleet gave her the advantage of superior renegade navigation and war tactics.

Jim James stood with his crippled muscular posture, and took a deep breath of the humid salty air. His wooly beard covered his neck, and like all suave captains of the day, he sported a long black coat, silver muskets peeking out, and a fancy white shirt with gold buttons. The captain had begun to fade over the years, as time had withered and twisted his soul. But deep in his dark gaze one could still see the yearning for revenge. It was the last gaze for every man who had dared challenge his will.

Jim hollered to Oliver, his first mate, "Man her wheel you scurvy scrag. Bring us to clear skies, for I need some blithering rest. Tell no man to knock unless he desires to be hanged."

Jim retired to the ship's oak cabin where his dreams sailed away to lost memories of love. A woman in a white dress stood at *Victoria's* bow. He win howled in his ears and he yelled to the woman. No response came as he approached. Her fiery red hair reached out to him as it fluttered in the wind.

"Sarah, come to me; it's Jim. I have searched everywhere for you." The woman turned and looked at him; it was his wife, his love, but her face was bloated as though she had recently been pulled from the ocean.

A gurgling voice came from her ghostly presence: "Kiss me, Jim." Tears ran down his cheek and a haunting yell echoed through *Victoria's* hull.

Oliver, the first mate pressed his ears to the door of the mess hall. Three of the older pirates could be heard barking about the stale bread and sour win. But Oliver was listening for a different voice. Through the raspy whispers and drunken shouts, Oliver pressed harder to confirm his suspicion.

"We're on tonight, eh?"

"We'll slice that old savage across the throat and hang him from the mast..."

"I'm taking his scalp. The islanders will trade well for it."

"Assemble when the sotrm takes hold. Any of you maggots try and help him... this will surely be your last taste of spoiled spirits, so drink up!" Oliver had waited for this night for some time and a smile grew with every passing moment, knowing he would witness the end of the captain, the only man who kept him from controlling the fleet himself. The men had worked hard to find the right time to bring Jim down and

finally the perfect storm brewed. Jim lay asleep as his navigator steered courageously for the storm's eye.

The Captain awoke to a breeze that tensed his spin. *Victoria* hit a large breaker and it stumbled to the ground. As he rose, he rested his hand on his musket. He lifted it and let it pin around his hardened trigger finger. It was too light. Someone had taken the bullet from the chamber. Immediately, Jim bolted the door. Only once had *Victoria* been almost taken by mutiny. Jim knew immediately what his bastard crew of backstabbing deadbeats had planned. He ripped down his shelf to reveal a small hatch. Inside, he gathered and loaded fifteen golden Spanish flintlock pistols, a deadly one-of-a-kind set. They were enough to equip an entire royal crew. He hung them from his chest, and over them he draped his coat. This old dog was ready to bite, but he would wait until arms were outstretched.

The Captain kicked the cabin door open and swiftly made his way through the quiet crew. Grey clouds welcomed him with slow falling rain. He noticed the quick glances from the older villains. The Spanish gold was heavy to his chest, and his heart began to beat with adrenaline. No one manned the wheel and the rain began to drip over the crest of Jim's hat. The entire crew dropped their mask of work and began speaking with one another. Jim James, a seemingly invincible devil, stared straight forward, projecting a dark heavy gaze toward his sailors. Without a single word, he stabbed Oliver in the spine and before his bewildered head hit the deck, shots from Jim's arsenal rang out. He refused to miss. His golden battalion ripped through all those in sight. Twelve sailors lay dying below the stairs to the wheel, over which Jim stood. One young man laughed as he coughed blood. He held in his hand a torch which he let fall from his grip. The torch hit the deck setting off three barrels of explosive canon powder. The barrels ripped a blazing hole through the side of the boat. *Victoria* released great tangerine plumes of fire and through the orange wet haze, Jim crawled.

Gunpowder exploded from Jim James's fists. He retreated as a bullet ripped through his coat. As men jumped from *Victoria's* rigging, she called to him. He looked up and saw her red hair waving through the wet mist. Jim embraced her figure. A wounded sailor reached high in the air and brought down an axe over the Captain's back. Jim fell from the bow. As he drowned, he began to breathe her breath and *Victoria* went under.

When It's Too Late to Come Clean

She tried with me,
Barely,
To smooth the creases in my hands. I only wanted her to treat me like the stiff
collared shirts
She presses for me, everyday
Before work.
And she's smoking kike she's worth less than half of my life
Like it doesn't matter if she stains me.
I take my hands back
Inspecting our progress.
I only see now that I'm old and that she'll never fold me formal.
These cracks in my palms breed shadows;
It's the perfect environment for growing the dark side of me.
She flicks ash in my open hand
And I'm thinking that if I get a someday maybe I'll take the time
To find someone who'll treat me kind.
Standing, she talks away from me saying she'll fetch the iron.
Shadows fill my hand
Mixed with ash.
I wish that I could drink it up like some black wine,
And never think of death again.
But gradual shading got the best of me in my older years.
My hair is the only grey, the only middle ground I can find.
She's got in plugged into the wall, iron
Steaming more than she does,
More than she cares.
I'm crying for her not to burn me too bad,
Just to press the shadows out of me.
Clean and crisp.
Like a man's work shirt with too much starch.

